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Chinese (background speakers)

2016 Chief Assessor’s Report

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**Overview**

Chief Assessors’ reports give an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, the quality of student performance, and any relevant statistical information.

**School Assessment**

**Assessment Type 1: Folio**

There are three assessments for the folio: interaction, text production, and text analysis. Most teachers designed four or five tasks for this assessment type, which provided students with more opportunities to demonstrate evidence against the performance standards in this assessment type.

Interaction

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated a clear idea of the purpose, audience, and context of the task through the use of subject-specific and context-appropriate information and linguistic resources
* demonstrated competence in relation to the ideas and the expression assessment design criteria by expressing opinions in response to open-ended questions, without being reliant on a script.

**The less successful responses**

* provided very general information on the topic, with little or no explanation of the information they referred to, limited analysis, and lack of depth
* demonstrated limited confidence and preparation to respond in greater depth to unscripted questions and comments from the interlocutor.

It is important for teachers to be engaged in the interaction task(s). In discussions, care should be taken to give students the opportunity to expand on their answers so as to demonstrate evidence of depth and breadth in the treatment of the topic. The teacher should facilitate the discussion, not dominate it.

Text Production

**The more successful responses**

* were based on a specified contemporary issue
* demonstrated an understanding of the language and structures relevant to the specified text type
* were in response to a focused question or stimulus, and specified a clear context, purpose, audience, and kind of writing
* addressed an issue, as specified in the subject outline
* conveyed opinions about the issue, as well as detailed information
* identified and used appropriate information and ideas from reference texts to formulate and express ideas, information, and opinions.

**The less successful responses**

* provided a response with limited information on a topic and without considering different perspectives.

Text Analysis

**The more successful responses**

* analysed and provided details about the content, purpose, audience, language, and structure of the text(s)
* demonstrated an understanding in the student’s own words and with appropriate textual references to support opinions and inferences.

**The less successful responses**

* identified key issues in the text(s) but did not use examples from the text(s) effectively to support their analysis.

It is important that teachers are very clear about the requirements as set out in the subject outline, and give students opportunities to fulfil these requirements. Some good text-analysis tasks allowed students to compare the perspectives, ideas, and opinions in the text(s) on the topic so that students were able to demonstrate their competence in the essential part of this assessment — the evaluation and reflection assessment design criterion. It was difficult for students to demonstrate specific feature ER2 (analysis of linguistic, cultural, and stylistic features) if the written task just required them to respond to a text.

When designing text-analysis tasks, it is important to select text(s) that are complex enough in nature for students to demonstrate evidence against the specific features ER1 and ER2. It is also critical that questions eliciting responses that demonstrate evidence of ER1 and ER2 are posed for the text(s).

**Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study**

There are three assessments for the in-depth study: oral presentation in Chinese, written response to the topic in Chinese, and reflective response in English.

**The more successful responses**

* focused on a specific topic that was of interest or relevance to the students
* analysed findings from a variety of sources and synthesised information (for the written response in Chinese)
* used appropriate referencing methods and correctly referenced quotes and the ideas of others, which were elaborated upon in the student’s own words
* were able to present ideas, opinions, and perspectives on an aspect of their in‑depth study in a spontaneous and independent way, without over-reliance on prepared answers or reading from a script (for the oral presentation in Chinese)
* demonstrated analysis and comprehensive knowledge of the chosen topic
* presented focused information on specific aspects of the topic and elaborated in detail with analysis and/or explanation of how the texts studied informed their own understanding and perspectives on the topic (for the reflective response in English).

**The less successful responses**

* investigated a topic that was too broad and general, making it difficult to demonstrate evidence against the ideas assessment design criterion to a high level
* presented a series of quotes with little or no attempt to analyse and evaluate the information, ideas, or perspectives
* did not demonstrate a clear purpose other than to present some general information on the topic or to simply describe the process of their research (for the reflective response in English).

Students are required to carry out an in-depth study (IDS) on one contemporary issue. While it is appropriate for teachers to advise on suitable issues, the IDS must be a product of independent study and not a response to a topic taught to the whole class.

The topics chosen for the IDS were mostly appropriate. They were diverse, fresh, and interesting; for example, the progress of China’s aviation industry, the impact of Hollywood movies on both the global and Chinese movie industry, globalisation, and the impact of Western culture on traditional Chinese culture. Even the ‘old favourite’ topics, such as male and female equality, food safety in China, population issues, and air pollution in China, were looked at with new and/or different perspectives.

A number of topics, such as a specific Chinese festival, did not lend themselves to in‑depth analysis and reflection, and were thus inappropriate for this assessment type. Furthermore, some IDS topics were the same or very similar to topics covered in Assessment Type 1: Folio, which is not encouraged.

As specified in the subject outline, the writing in Chinese and oral presentation in Chinese tasks should differ in context, purpose, and audience. Using the same or similar requirements for both tasks is problematic, as there is inevitably some crossover of information and ideas between the two tasks, which limits students’ opportunities to cover their choice of topic in sufficient depth to demonstrate evidence of their learning at the highest level.

In addition, a 7-minute time-limit is set for the IDS oral presentation task. A number of oral tasks were substantially longer than this. Students must keep within the specified time-limit. Similarly, both the Chinese and English responses for the IDS have word or character limits, and anything beyond the specified limits is not assessed or reviewed at moderation.

**External Assessment**

**Assessment Type 3: Examination**

The vast majority of students successfully completed both parts of the examination (oral and written) and achieved a C– or higher result.

Oral Examination

The overall achievement of students in this part of the examination was excellent. Approximately 97% of students achieved a C– or higher, including 20% of students who achieved a result in the A band.

**The more successful responses**

* focused on topics that were carefully chosen, refreshing, meaningful and interesting
* demonstrated evidence that extensive research was conducted appropriately and thoroughly
* demonstrated evidence of their learning and their understanding of contemporary issues in China with some degree of depth and breadth
* demonstrated excellent research skills, such as screening sources, data collection, logical reasoning, abstract summary, and conclusion
* interpreted experts’ theories accurately and used them as references to justify their views
* used clear and confident expressions, structuring their arguments logically and coherently with sophisticated language (grammatical rhetoric and vocabulary)
* showed profound and insightful reflection on their study, including reflection on their own values, beliefs, ideas, and experiences
* were very well prepared for the discussion.

**The less successful responses**

* lacked evidence of thorough research
* focused on an inappropriate choice of research topic
* provided irrelevant answers to questions asked by the examiners due to either not listening to the questions being asked or misinterpreting the questions asked
* gave memorised or rehearsed answers, rather than spontaneous responses
* lacked the ability to talk in depth on the topic researched
* demonstrated difficulty in explaining their opinions clearly, logically, and coherently
* were unable to provide any evidence of learning, e.g. resources studied, current situation of the issue in society, or experts’ opinions on the issue
* lacked sufficient preparation.

Written Examination

**Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part A**

The overall achievement of students in Section 1, Part A was comparatively low compared to the rest of examination. As in previous years, this may have been due to English being the students’ second language, which prevented students from fully understanding questions posed in English or expressing themselves clearly in answers. 61% of responses were awarded 5 marks or more (out of 10).

*Question 1(a)*

**The more successful responses**

* were able to fully identify the purpose of the text, which was to inform people and promote awareness about the possible development of alternative energy sources in China.

**The less successful responses**

* provided information about the content of the text rather than identifying the purpose of the text.

*Question 1(b)*

**The more successful responses**

* were able to identify all of the relevant information about the current situation regarding energy production and consumption in China, such as China being the world’s largest coal producer and consumer, and having become the world’s second-largest energy producer and consumer, etc.

**The less successful responses**

* did not include sufficient relevant information from the text.

*Question 1(c)*

**The more successful responses**

* were able to identify all of the factors that affect the possible development of renewable energy sources in China, such as a lack of natural resources (water) for hydropower, lack of the expensive core technology required to develop renewable energy, etc.

**The less successful responses**

* did not include sufficient relevant information from the text.

*Question 1(d)*

This seemed to be the most challenging part of Question 1.

**The more successful responses**

* identified and summarised Professor Yang’s position on the issue of nuclear power, and provided comprehensive justification from the text.

**The less successful responses**

* were unable to identify and summarise Professor Yang’s position
* were unable to express or explain their response clearly
* did not provide justification from the text.

**Section 1: Listening and Responding, Part B**

The majority of students performed well in Section 1, Part B and achieved a C– result or better, with 5% of students achieving a result in the A band.

*Question 2*

**The more successful responses**

* were able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of both texts
* evaluated, compared, and contrasted both points of view on issues from the two texts
* were able to convey their own opinions clearly, logically, and cohesively.

**The less successful responses**

* did not fully understand the issues which were presented in the texts
* simply repeated (or copied) what was in the texts without any evidence of analysis, comparison, or evaluation
* did not cover both sides of the argument
* did not put forward their own opinion
* used an incorrect text type (e.g. wrote a letter instead of an article)
* presented illogical opinions
* lacked cohesion of ideas, information, and opinions.

**Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part A**

The majority of students (84%) achieved a C– or higher. Among them, 12% of students achieved an A– or higher, which is comparatively better than 2015.

*Question 3(a)*

This question part posed a challenge for many students. The question asked students to explain the issue presented in the text and to support their answer with reference to the text. Many responses received zero marks.

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated excellent reading comprehension skills by summarising the core meaning from the text
* provided a perceptive and insightful explanation of the issue of the conflict between traditional values and modern values due to cultural changes in China.

**The less successful responses**

* showed little or no understanding of the issues which were presented in the text
* simply repeated (or copied) what was in the texts without any explanation
* only partially explained the issue
* answered the question with their own questions.

*Question 3(b)*

Question 3(b) was the most challenging question part in Section 2, Part A. It required students to demonstrate their language and literature knowledge and skills.

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated an excellent knowledge of Chinese language and literature by analysing how the language is used to express the author’s feelings, and how the author uses specific words in the text to show sympathy with the plight of young people
* expressed themselves clearly, logically, and cohesively.

**The less successful responses**

* did not show a full understanding of the text
* misunderstood the question
* simply repeated (or copied) what was in the text without any analysis and explanation
* did not use examples from the text to support their argument.

*Question 3(c)*

This question part required students to have a good knowledge of Chinese rhetorical techniques and literary devices. Most students performed very well and many of them gained the full 8 marks available for Question 3(c).

**The more successful responses**

* correctly identified and explained the metaphors in the context of the text.

**The less successful responses**

* wrongly identified the metaphors
* identified rhetorical techniques or literary devices other than metaphors
* explained the metaphors in the context of the text incorrectly.

**Section 2: Reading and Responding, Part B**

The vast majority of students performed well in Section 2, Part B. 95% of students achieved a C– or higher result, with 11% achieving a result in the A band.

*Question 4*

**The more successful responses**

* wrote a letter to the Editor (a formal letter)
* referred to the information in the text
* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the issues in the text
* expressed their own opinions clearly, logically, and cohesively
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

**The less successful responses**

* did not show a thorough understanding of the issues which were presented in the text
* simply repeated (or copied) what was in the text without any analysis or evaluation of the issues
* did not refer to the information from the text
* presented ideas at a superficial level
* did not put forward their own opinion
* did not justify their own opinion on the issue
* provided an incorrect text type (e.g. wrote an article instead of a letter), or used incorrect conventions or specifications for the text type
* did not use all of the appropriate conventions of the text type
* provided a response that was not presented logically and cohesively with complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

**Section 3: Writing in Chinese**

There were four questions in this section of the examination, with the students expected to choose one to answer.

The overall performance of the students was very pleasing in this part. The vast majority (94%) of students achieved a C– or higher result.

*Question 5*

Question 5 was selected by 25% of the students.

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of education reform in China
* provided an analysis and evaluation of the effects of the reform
* provided their own suggestions for further reforms to China’s education system
* justified their suggestions and opinions
* referred to the texts studied during the year
* used the correct conventions of the text type (report)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary
* expressed their thoughts clearly, logically, and cohesively.

**The less successful responses**

* communicated ideas that were not relevant to the question (e.g. focused on criticising the education system in China)
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding about education reform in China
* only talked about the issues without any analysis or evaluation of the reforms
* lacked depth — their thoughts on social issues were at a superficial level
* did not keep to the point
* did not clearly express and justify their opinions
* provided an incorrect text type, or used incorrect conventions or specifications for the text type
* did not express their thoughts logically and cohesively (e.g. wrote long paragraphs with no logical or coherent structure)
* used no complex grammar structures or sophisticated vocabulary.

*Question 6*

Question 6 was selected by 30% of the students.

**The more successful responses**

* demonstrated a thorough understanding of the issue of the need to ‘find a connection’ to get things done in China being a fundamental part of the culture
* offered analysis, evaluation, and reflection on the impact of this cultural practice on Chinese people’s lives today
* provided their own opinions and perspectives on the issue
* provided examples of this cultural practice in everyday life
* justified all opinions and suggestions
* referred to the texts studied during the year
* used the correct conventions of the text type (journal entry)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary
* expressed their thoughts clearly, logically, and cohesively.

**The less successful responses**

* communicated ideas that were not fully relevant to the question (e.g. just wrote stories about how Chinese people in China find the connections to send their children to school, to find a job, to see a doctor, and so on)
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding about the impact of the cultural practice on Chinese people’s lives today
* only listed the current situation, without any analysis or evaluation of the impact
* showed a lack of depth — their thoughts on this social issue were at a superficial level
* did not clearly express and justify their opinions
* provided an incorrect text type, or used incorrect conventions or specifications for the text type
* did not express themselves logically and cohesively (e.g. by writing long paragraphs with no logical and coherent structure)
* did not use complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

*Question 7*

Question 7 was selected by 9% of the students.

**The more successful responses**

* evaluated the Australia–China bilateral relationship
* discussed the increasing importance of the relationship
* suggested an idea for an event which would further strengthen the bond between Australia and China
* explained and justified all suggestions or opinions
* referred to the texts studied during the year
* used the correct conventions of the text type (essay)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary
* expressed thoughts clearly, logically, and cohesively.

**The less successful responses**

* provided opinions that were not quite relevant to the question
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding about the increasing importance of the Australia–China relationship
* did not provide any analysis and evaluation of the relationship
* did not suggest any idea for an event
* showed a lack of depth — the discussion was at a superficial level
* provided an incorrect text type, or used incorrect conventions or specifications for the text type
* did not clearly express and justify their opinions
* did not express thoughts logically and cohesively
* did not use complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

*Question 8*

Question 8 was the most selected question (36%) in Section 3, and produced the highest results.

**The more successful responses**

* declared their own position on the issue
* offered a number of opinions or arguments to support their position
* supported opinions or arguments with examples
* justified all suggestions or opinions
* referred to texts studied during the year
* used the correct conventions of the text type (speech)
* used complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary
* expressed their thoughts clearly, logically, and cohesively.

**The less successful responses**

* did not declare their own position on the issue
* provided opinions that were not quite relevant to the question
* did not keep to the point (did not argue about whether or not residential care facilities are an ideal environment for senior citizens)
* showed a lack of knowledge and understanding about the issue
* showed a lack of depth — their thoughts on the issue were at a superficial level
* did not clearly express and justify their opinions
* provided an incorrect text type, or used incorrect conventions for the text type
* did not present their thoughts logically and cohesively
* did not use complex grammar structures and sophisticated vocabulary.

## Operational Advice

School assessment tasks are set and marked by teachers. Teachers’ assessment decisions are reviewed by moderators. Teacher grades/marks should be evident on all student school assessment work.

Teachers need to be aware of the following:

* In preparing the moderation package(s), only the learning and assessment plan (LAP) (including an addendum, where applicable) and the samples of the selected students’ work need to be submitted. Please be reminded that class teaching materials and draft work do not need to be submitted for moderation.
* A complete set of task sheets should be submitted in the moderation package.
* Tasks should be labelled clearly using students’ SACE registration numbers and by the assessment type.
* Ensure that the entire set of work for each student is submitted in a single clear bag.
* Any alteration to the assessment tasks identified on the LAP should be recorded and submitted on an addendum.

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